

16580 F

Forest Fields Independent Residents' Group

NEWSLETTER

July 2000

Issue 3

The Tram is coming – but we demand compensation

Many of us first realised that Nottingham's first tram was going to run straight through our area when the "DIVERSION" and "ROAD CLOSED" signs sprang up like weeds.

Councillor Taylor and the rest of the Tram Consortium say that if we don't like it we should have done something about it 11 years ago when the plans were discussed and taken to Parliament for approval.

Well, we might have protested had we realised what massive disruption and change it would bring- no public meetings or big reports in the Evening Post then!

Now we seem to be stuck with it. But, if we are going to suffer so that the rest of the City can boast improvements we should not suffer in silence. We should demand compensation, as an area, for the noise, dirt, pollution, disruption and damage to our lives that building and running the tram will mean.

A Nottingham tram expert with detailed knowledge of every tram system in the country says that there is nowhere else where trams run through areas like this. **Trams are not meant to run through densely populated narrow residential streets.**

What will having the tram mean for us?

- More traffic and pollution
- Danger to residents-especially children
- Loss of play areas
- Parking hell
- Noise, dirt and misery

 ★ PUBLIC MEETING ★
 ★ TO ★
 ★ DISCUSS THE TRAM AND BUSES AND WHAT WE WANT ★
 ★ FOREST FIELDS WELFARE ASSOCIATION ★
 ★ Junction of Russell Rd/Laurie Avenue ★
 ★ Monday 24 July at 7.30pm. ★
 ★ (Organised by Forest Fields Independent Residents' Group) ★

Forest Fields Independent Residents' Group meets at 7.30 pm on the first and third Monday of each month at the Advice Centre on Wiverton Road. For more information phone 0115 8410457

The Tram is coming-cont.

More traffic and pollution: Motorists will cut through Forest Fields when Radford Road becomes one-way only. A huge Park & Ride on Wilkinson Street will increase pollution and traffic.

Danger to residents – especially children: The tram is massive and silent and it will also run between three primary schools. At peak times a tram will run up Noel Street every 6 minutes- just as our kids are going to school.

Loss of play areas: Without big gardens and open space, the streets are our kids playgrounds. But one of the main streets in the area is being turned into the equivalent of a busy railway line.

Parking hell: Noel Street will lose 30 parking spaces during construction, and 33 spaces once the tram is completed. Parking will be restricted on Burford Rd. once 100 buses daily run down it. Once the tram is running, people will park in Forest Fields, before jumping on the Tram.

Noise, dirt and misery: This is the biggest engineering project Nottingham has ever had. Three years of upheaval. Cranes on Berridge Rd. Totally moving the water, gas and other services on Noel St. Relining the sewers. Erecting overhead cables and tracks in the road.

Would this be allowed to happen in Wollaton or West Bridgford – I don't think so! So why do NET think they can do it here? Do they really think we won't mind? When our children and animals risk injury? When we have even more dirt to breathe and clean from our homes? When we will have not peace from drills, jack hammers and lorries?

This area should have lavish compensations. For example, we want:

- Wonderful parks and play areas- with the best quality equipment and supervised to keep all of our young children safe and happy.
- Patrolled and controlled crossings- all along the route of the tram- giving priority to pedestrians.
- Residents' parking schemes throughout the whole area – established well before the tram
- Double glazing for all residents affected by extra traffic and construction noise and dirt.

These are the very minimum demands we should have. There are many more, but one thing is certain we won't get anything unless we demand it and refuse to shut up. We can only do this together. We must stand up for our area and each other because no one else will do it.

GREAT EXPECTATIONS?- NOT IN OUR AREA- THANK YOU.

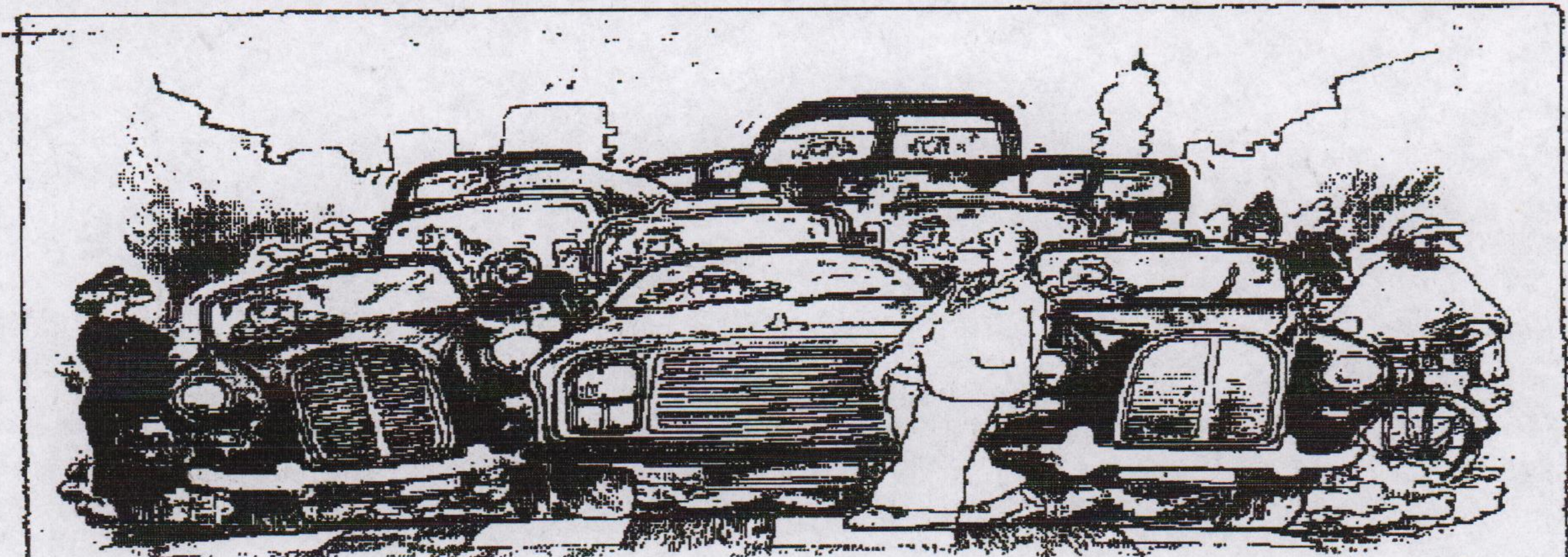
On 4th July, in just one hour, 1.00pm to 2.00pm over 1000 vehicles travelled southbound down Radford Road towards the City! Over 100 vehicles every 5 minutes.

According to this survey, thousands of cars, vans, lorries and buses travel on a route into the City which will be closed in October. It's not hard to guess where they will end up. Burford Road, along with the surrounding area, will be hit hard as converging traffic mingles with buses, many of them double-deckers, fighting for a route through.

Councillor John Taylor states that the tram construction will bring the biggest building project ever seen in Nottingham. He refuses to accept that it may bring the biggest traffic chaos ever seen-

IT'S US WHO WILL HAVE TO FACE THIS.

We must be ready to prevent this happening in our area. It will threaten every aspect of our lives. We call for another public meeting to re-voice our concerns and bring new proposals.



A normal day on Burford Road and other streets in Forest Fields if we do nothing

LEISURE CENTRE UPDATE- HALF TRUTHS AND HYPOCRISY.

Nottingham City Council are now saying that they have a mandate to build the Leisure Centre on the Forest and they will be closing both Noel St and Victoria Leisure Centres.

This will come as a surprise to the protesters who, on January 27th packed out the council chambers at the full leisure services meeting. The council clearly led us to believe that they were actively exploring other sites for the Leisure Centre.

Different explanations have been offered to us about why they now feel they have a right to build:

1. Because the Labour Party included a pledge to build on the Forest Recreation Ground and as they still have a majority in the council then they will build.
2. Leisure Services officials are claiming that the meeting on Jan.27th identified that the Forest was the chosen site, and the committee gave the plans the go ahead.

We packed that meeting out, we listened to what they said, how come none of us heard the go ahead given? They definitely gave the impression that they were going to explore the possibility of other sites. We are angry that they have manipulated the truth. This is the same council that hypocritically pledges itself to 'open government'. To develop on the Forest also ignores and contradicts their own stated commitments to the 'Green Charter' and the "Best Value" document.

No serious attempt has ever been made by the council to explore other sites for the development. We are hoping to hold a joint press conference along with the Civic Society to promote other possible sites and to advocate the case for modern accessible community facilities i.e the upgrading and development of Noel St and Victoria.

Another possible route to challenge the development is to raise objections at the planning stage. Anyone is entitled to make an objection to a planning application. If you write to the City Planning Section then they say they will notify you in person when the plans for the Leisure Centre are submitted and they will update you on any developments.

Lets keep up the pressure.

So this is community planning . . .

(Forest Fields Community Planning day 17 June)

It's easy to criticise . . so, I'll start with the positives.

First, some people are putting a lot of effort into trying to get improvements in this area. Second, although the turnout was low, it is always useful to hear people talk about the issues that affect them locally. Lack of play space, the Forest plans, dog dirt, local jobs, empty buildings, the tram were just some of the issues mentioned.

Despite this, I'm not quite sure what the consultants from London – *John Thompson and Partners* – were being paid to do.

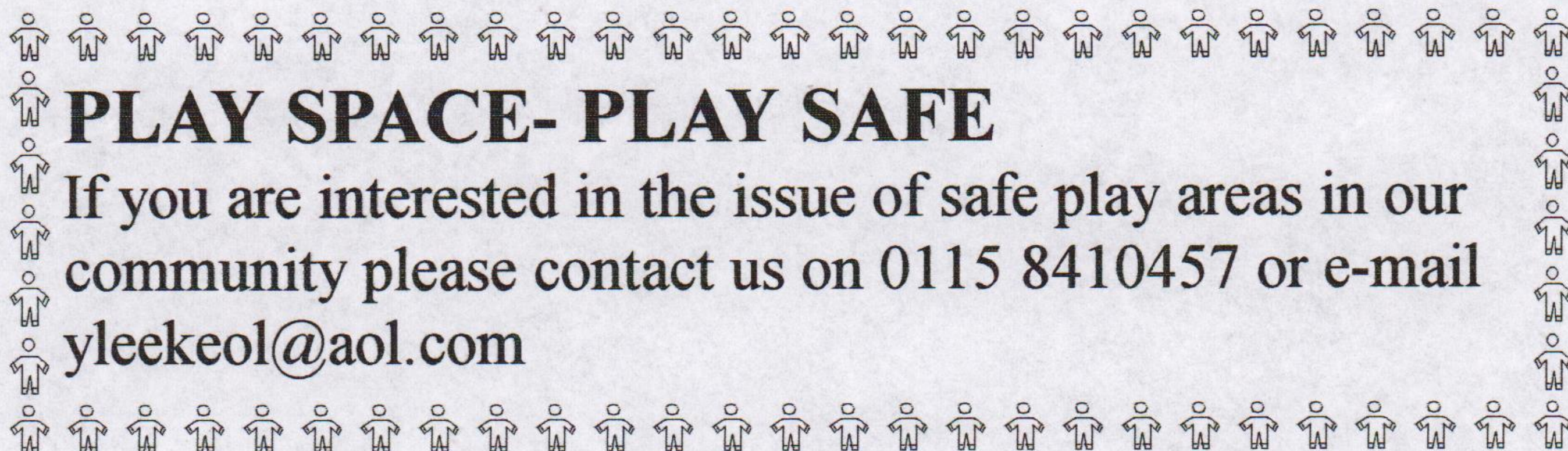
In the morning, we were asked to say what we thought the local problems were and what we thought the 'solutions' might be. **But does this really take a professional consultant?**

There have been four community planning meetings, one each in Hyson Green, Radford, New Basford and Forest Fields.

In all it has cost about £25,000 – but what have we learned that we didn't already know?

What's interesting is that if this consultation process hadn't happened the money from Europe that paid for it wouldn't have been available. Let's face it there is a lot of money sloshing about. But it's either tied up in knots – you can have it for this but not for that – or the people who know how to get it are those on the regeneration gravy train.

How much regeneration money gets spent on consultants' fees and the wages of regeneration professionals who live outside the area? How much money ends up outside the community supposedly being regenerated. In this case, with John Thomas and his mates in London.

**PLAY SPACE- PLAY SAFE**
If you are interested in the issue of safe play areas in our community please contact us on 0115 8410457 or e-mail yleekeol@aol.com

FOREST FIELDS INDEPENDENT RESIDENTS GROUP

What are we about?

We've been having some discussions in FFIRG about our aims. A member of the group makes the following contribution. What do you think?

AIMS AND AMBITIONS

- We want to strengthen the sense of community in Forest Fields and link with other similar organisations in Nottingham and elsewhere.
- We think that the elected council members representing Forest Fields act in the interests of the Labour majority and the business community before they act in the interests of local residents.
- Our aim is to continue to highlight this partnership and act independently of ^{any political} the Labour party.
- We want to maintain an independent residents' group that offers a forum for residents to have a say in local matters and voice opposition to plans that do not benefit residents.
- We want to actively encourage tolerance of diversity in the community and intolerance of anti social behaviour.
- We oppose the rise of right wing politics and fascist parties that pretend to be the new radical opposition to the failures of the traditional political parties.
- We want to remain in the hands of local people who want to get involved and attempt to represent the views of the Forest Fields residents.

If you agree with these points then offer your support. We meet on the first and third Monday of every month at 7.30 pm at the Forest Fields Advice Centre, Wiverton Road.

...And another thing...

The reasoning behind the above is straight forward. We established the residents' group in opposition to a Labour Party that had, not only, recently come to power at a national level but continued to control the city council. We felt that the views of people in Forest Fields were no longer represented by local councillors. Our aim was to offer something new by allowing an open agenda to local residents. We did not simply want to see one political party replace another. We believe that our representatives should be accountable to the community that elects them.

Our reasoning is made all the more clearer by some of the decisions made by the council in recent months. They act in a way that suggests that if a few members of the Labour Party agree then this gives them a mandate. For example the building of the leisure centre has had wide-spread opposition. They dismissed our suggestion that the loss of local facilities in Sneinton and Forest Fields was unacceptable and that the building of a leisure complex was a good idea but not on open green space. The support we had for these ideas out stripped any support for the council but no compromise was given. They had made up their minds, but this to our minds is not democracy.

They talk about consultation with the community but only on their terms. If you thought that building a leisure centre on the Forest was stupid what about running a tram down Noel Street. Try the traffic congestion that we will have for the next three years. Try sending double decker buses down Burford Road ???

A wise move by a shrewd and caring council or just plain stupidity from self serving businessmen



(Not Entirely Trustworthy?)

Did you miss the last meeting they called?

NET (the Tram company) has pledged to keep local people informed. How serious are they?

The last meeting was held at the Forest School but some of their leaflets put through some letter-boxes and displayed in some shop windows advertised that the meeting would be at the ACFF on Beaconsfield Street!

If this, or any other of their actions, caused you problems tell them on the Tram Hotline. The number is 0115 915600
